

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NAIROB 00276 111228Z

43

ACTION AID-59

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----- 074589

R 111140Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5073

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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JOINT EMBASSY/AG ATTACHE/USAID MESSAGE

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON KE

SUBJECT: DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN KENYA

BEGIN SUMMARY: SUBNORMAL RAINFALL OVER SOME SECTIONS OF KENYA DURING MOST OF LASTYEAR HAS CREATED DROUGHT CONDITIONS AND POTENTIAL FOOD EMERGENCY IN AFFECTED AREAS, ALTHOUGH NATIONAL STOCKS OF FOOD, CHIEFLY MAIZE, AMPLE AVERT A FAMINE IF PROPERLY DISTRIBUTED. ALTHOUGH NOT YET IN CRISIS OR DISASTER SITUATION, EMBASSY HAS TAKEN STEPS TO MOBILIZE COUNTRY TEAM CAPACITY MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS ANYALYSIS SITUATION AND RESPONSE CAPABILITY SHOULD U.S. ASSISTANCE BE REQUIRED. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENT KENYA PRESS STORIES REPORTED THAT FAMINE CONDITIONS EXIST IN NORTHERN PARTS OF COUNTRY. REPORTEDLY, SOME PEOPLE AND MANY ANIMALS HAVE DIED FROM STARVATION; EMERGENCY MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO FEED LOCAL POPULATION. POST HAS NOT CONFIRMED HUMAN DEATHS, BUT HAS OBSERVED

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PAGE 02 NAIROB 00276 111228Z

LIVESTOCK LOSSES AS FAR BACK AS OCTOBER. GAME DEPARTMENT

ALSO REPORTED DEATH OF GAME ANIMALS IN SEVERAL AREAS.

2. REPORT ISSUED BY METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT LATE DECEMBER STATES SHORT RAINS IN SEVERAL AREAS NEAR CENTRAL KENYA/SOMALIA BORDER REGION, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN PARTS OF EASTERN PROVINCE, SOUTHERN KENYA RIFT VALLEY AND KAJIADO DISTRICT AND SOUTH INTO TANZANIA HAVE BEEN LESS 50 PERCENT OF NORMAL DURING OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER. THESE ARE POTENTIAL DROUGHT AREAS. OTHER ADJACENT AREAS ALSO EXPERIENCING RAINFALL DEFICITS.

3. COUNTRY TEAM VIEW BASED REVIEW RAINFALL DATA FOR VARIOUS DISTRICTS, CROP DELIVERIES OVER LAST QUARTER 1973 AND OBSERVATIONS IN AFFECTED AREAS IS THAT THERE IS POTENTIAL DISASTER SITUATION IN THESE AREAS.

4. ON OTHER HAND, KENYA'S STOCKS OF CORN, THE BASIC DIET OF MOST OF POPULATION, AND MILK ARE SUFFICIENT TO AVERT FAMINE IF PROPERLY DISTRIBUTED. THE CENTRAL PROBLEM MAY TURN OUT TO BE HOW TO FINANCE THE COST OF FREE DISTRIBUTION OF FOODSTUFF TO POVERTY AND FAMINE STRICKEN. THE PHYSICAL PROBLEM OF DISTRIBUTING FOOD SUPPLIES TO AFFECTED AREAS SEEMS MANAGEABLE BY GOK, VOLUNTARY AND PARASTATAL AGENCIES. BUT RECURRENT SPOT SHORTAGES OF SUCH PRODUCTS AS MAIZE-MEAL DESPITE EXISTENCE OF OVER-AMPLE SUPPLIES OF MAIZE IN THE COUNTRY UNDERSCORE EXISTENCE OF SOMETIMES CLUMSY AND INEFFICIENT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.

5. ALTHOUGH SITUATION IS SERIOUS, IT HAS NOT YET REACHED CRISIS OR DISASTER PROPORTIONS. SHOULD A CRISIS DEVELOP, THERE MAY BE REQUEST FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE.

6. EMBASSY HAS TAKEN FOLLOWING ACTIONS TO ASSURE CAPACITY AND READINESS RESPOND SHOULD OUR ASSISTANCE BE NEEDED:

A. ESTABLISHED POST QUOTE WATCH COMMITTEE UNQUOTE COMPOSED EMBASSY ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER, AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE, AND USAID FOOD AND AGRICULTURE OFFICER.
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PAGE 03 NAIROB 00276 111228Z

B. DESIGNATED USAID FOOD AND AGRICULTURE OFFICER AS POST DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR.

C. DIRECTED USAID APPRISE U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES (E.G. CRS) OF SITUATION AND MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS LIAISON.

7. GOK APPEARS BE TAKING SITUATION SERIOUSLY. HOWEVER, MISSION PROCEEDING WITH ON-SITE SURVEY AFFECTED AREAS

WITH MORE DETAILED REPORT TO FOLLOW.LINDSTROM

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